



The Haivision Podcast

Real Time Intelligence Centers & Emergency Operations with Jamie Hudson – Part 2

Summary of the Episode

In this episode of the Haivision Podcast, our sales team, Dustin, Jason, and Matt, interview Jamie Hudson, director of real-time consulting at Flock Safety. They discuss the crucial role of real-time intelligence centers in enhancing inter-agency visual aid.

Jamie delves into the challenges and importance of training in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) world, emphasizing the need for effective incident command systems and calm, coordinated responses during crises.

He shares insights from his experience managing remote EOC operations during a major flooding event, highlighting the integration of technology like drones and mobile cameras for real-time situational awareness. Jamie advocates for building a real-time center philosophy before investing in physical infrastructure, stressing the importance of scalable technology and regional intelligence centers. He also touches on the efficiency of regional real-time centers over individual agency centers. The conversation provides valuable perspectives on improving emergency response and operations through technology and collaboration.

Transcript

Introduction to the Podcast

Welcome to the Haivision Podcast, where we take a deep dive into the innovations and challenges shaping video technology. In each episode, we'll bring you insights from experts behind cutting-edge video networking, visual collaboration, and video-wall solutions.

So whether you're a professional navigating the complexities of video-wall technology, working in live production, or someone simply curious about new tech, this podcast is for you.

Join us as we explore the latest trends, share success stories, and discuss the technology shaping the future of mission-critical video environments.

00:13 - Episode Overview

In this episode, our sales team continues the discussion with Jamie Hudson, current Director of Real-Time Consulting at Flock Safety.

Listen as they go into further details about real-time Intelligence Centers and Emergency Operations. Enjoy!

01:33 - Training in the EOC World

Jamie: Training in the EOC world is not liked by many. And for good reason, right? Because in the EOC world, we use the incident command system.

And Incident Command System is a very well-designed and very effective situational structure that allows you to work an event without any one person feeling like they're working the entire event.

So imagine training in that, and I look at one person and go, your job is this. They might think that's the most boring job in the world.

And so they're in a training scenario where they're doing that job very well. But to them, this is pretty boring.

So that's where I say it's not liked by many because if you're doing it right, at the end of the training, everybody sees, "wow, that really came together". But when you're in the middle of it, it's just... For some, it's excruciating, right?

It's like, "oh my God, this is...what are we doing?" But if you don't do that and reality hits and you have a disaster or you have even a man-made disaster where somebody accidentally knocks out a gas line in the road and now you have this huge fireball, it allows you to be able to approach scenes and situations more calmly knowing that you're focused on your job and your specific task.

That transitions into the real-time space.

So that organizational or conductor mindset is there to where we need to be the conductor of this particular event. And by that, I mean, we may be using facial recognition with somebody over here and two operators over here are doing live camera operations and an operator over here is doing drone operations, right?

To either stream the video or control the drone themselves, whatever that might be. And the supervisor, manager, and or person in charge in there, depending on who it is, their job is to stay calm, apply structure, coordinate, get through it, right?

So it definitely spans both.

And really, that is prolific within the fire service, within the law enforcement side and within the emergency management side is that planning preparation, be ready for what may happen.

So when you do experience it, hopefully you're the calm one walking through that. You're not the one with your head cut off being led through it, right?

So, yeah, planning is critical. And again, though, it's not the most well-liked thing by many.

Host: Was there a “light bulb moment” where you knew you had to take some of that training from the RTIC and had to implement it in the EOC?

04:37 - Remote EOC Operations

Jamie: So for us, it was that discussion of the ability to run an EOC operation.

We didn't open a full EOC for our flooding in our rain event we had over New Year's, but we operated in a remote fashion.

And so that is where that particular instance for that span of a few weeks where we had evacuation centers open, we had legitimate levee breaches, things like that, we utilized our technology concepts by getting video from drones, flying over broken levees, flying over different flooded areas, using our traffic management system cameras to look at flooded intersections, deploying mobile camera assets to areas where we knew if we see water here, once it hits here, we're evacuating this swath of the city.

Streaming that out into the county's OES EOC so that they have that.

Streaming it into our section chiefs and our city manager and everybody else so that they all know what's happening in real-time, that's what we've been able to do, where we've been able to take real-time center operations and just by force insert them into EOC operations, right?

And that, unfortunately, the world of EOC is very traditional and so things don't come easily when you want to make change or even try new concepts out.

Luckily here, and I preach this every chance I get, we have full support bottom to top, elected officials, city manager, chiefs, et cetera, to try things out that

make sense that are logical that will help us with the efficiency of mitigating any police response, any EOC activation response. And so because of that, we're able to try these things, right? And hopefully you can try them in training.

But sometimes you end up needing to use them in real world where before you get a chance to train on them, it's time to go, right? And so that worked out really well. We were pretty happy with that.

And the video assets really gave our counties EOC some very good intel on what's happening as an eyewitness view as opposed to just hearing about what might be happening based on sensors, gauges, or somebody that saw it 12 hours before.

07:00 - Integrating Technology in Traditional EOC Settings

Jamie: Yeah, that's kind of like you were saying earlier, is like the EOC is like this massive ingest engine and then the information center can be sort of the output, the Apple TV or the Hulu for the city. And that information is really weighed, evaluated, and only the necessary part of that is what is then pushed out. So you're not just “firehosing” information on people, right? You're actually just giving them what they need.

Host: If you had to start everything from scratch day one today on either the RTIC or the EOC, how would you do it differently now as opposed? Because I know you went on this whole, you went on a journey. If you had to start one like today in the city of Jamie, you had to put one of these up. Like what would you do differently?

07:51 - Building an EOC or Real-Time Center from Scratch

Jamie: It's interesting to think about this because, understand that this is being answered by a guy who works in a built-out real-time center with a lot of great technology platforms, right?

So you're asking a guy that drives a Cadillac, do you think you should have a Cadillac, right? So I want to put that out there before I answer this. But if I started this from scratch, first thing, I wouldn't build a real-time center as my number one thing, right? **I would build the real-time center philosophy first.** And so I would have a computer and a desk and a person assigned and then have them start building platforms around what they're doing to be real-time. And so for instance, if you're in a city that has no live cameras, that's imperative in order to fully understand the usefulness of a real-time center. So that person would then start to look at that infrastructure, right?

If you have no license plate readers, it's not imperative that you have license plate readers, but it is absolutely beneficial, right? So they start building those around. Well, as soon as you have someone operating as a real-time center, so to speak, you need the ability to get that information that they now have out.

You have to be able to organize it first where they're at, but then they need to be able to push it out in some fashion to whomever, to dispatch, to first responders, to command staff, whoever it might be. So I would start to build that back end of what that is. And so you go from computer body desk to a couple of platforms, you're going to have live cameras, you're going to have LPR (license plate reader).

You'll probably have some type of web intelligence platform that you're going to want to bring in. What we found in our journey that we had is we were good at finding intelligence, but it's amazing how fast algorithmic intel gathering exceeds what I can do right now as a person. And so being able to incorporate that, the algorithm-based intel platforms, it just makes your job more efficient, right? It makes it a little simpler to do. So once that's there, and once that philosophy is there, then an agency has to make that decision.

Do we build a room to where now this becomes a command center? This becomes where now my executive staff, instead of having to all rush into the dispatch center to get updates, can go into this command center. And so if

you go that direction where now we're going to consolidate this person and what they're doing with real-time centering, and we're going to put them into a room and make that a command center for the entire department, then that needs to be built out. And that's where, in my opinion, that's where you need great display processing, right?

So the ability to push that information out, you need to be able to project that information onto some type of surface so that your folks that are gathered in this room now aren't all standing over the back of this one person in their computer, right? So that's where video walls for, and unfortunately, I do a disservice just calling them video walls, but that's where those come into play. It is, again, you don't have to build a room. You can put what we can loosely define as a video wall in a room that's already there, right, and that's already being used. So everything should be scalable, right? If you're lucky like I was, and I say that sincerely, you'll get a room, you'll get the keys to that room and go, okay, make this work, right? Well, everybody would want that, right?

So I know the position that I was in and have been thankful for that. But if I did it from scratch, the room would not have been first.

12:00 - Regional Real-Time Centers

Host: So the philosophy, we can introduce real-time right now, at any agency right now. It is tough if you don't have the infrastructure, right? So you have to work on that infrastructure for sure. First, yeah.

Jamie: Yeah, I've seen that come up in a number of conversations recently, and everyone is always coming in from a different starting point where it's like, oh, we've got the room, and then we put up a video wall, and then it's like, well, now we need stuff to put out there. Let's go find the stuff.

So you have the stuff, but you don't quite know what to do with it or how to redistribute it. And the one overwhelming thing, and kind of echo what you

just said, Jamie, is establishing your why. Like create your core, your pillars, whatever it is, that is going to be sort of your Rosetta Stone, your True North, for everything else that you do.

And you're just not going out there and you're getting tools, like you're getting tools to address a very specific value or a why that you've established for your operation center. Yeah, that's well said. And I still have to be a steward of the public fund. And you kind of hit it here when you mentioned, if an agency builds a room, you feel like you have to fill that room with things now, with platforms, with whatever else there is.

And so what I've seen firsthand is, and this is before we were lucky enough to be able to start the National Real-Time Crime Center Association, before we had a community of real-time centers we can draw on for experiences. But I've seen that happen, where they build a room and now they've got this video wall. I've got to put something on this, right? And so now you have them spending money on platforms that maybe they didn't need for another year, but they really could have used, you know, insert whatever tech they need there. So I do think that building a room first, it causes you to believe you need things you may not need. However, building a room first gives you that final and hardest piece that is most difficult to come by as you start to do stuff, right? So if you can find a way to do that, build it first. But understand, you know, you go to different agencies, you see their crime centers like we were able to do finally, and vet all of these different platforms, right? And see what's out there.

Now you can start looking at platforms going, okay, everybody doesn't have this one, but this fits really well into what we need to do here. And so you're not just going out and buying the new hotness. You're actually going out and doing your due diligence to buy what makes sense for you, right? And so, yeah, it's a tricky business, you know, and not every agency that wants a crime center has the money to send their staff to see crime centers.

And so that's tricky, right? And so now you're relying on crime centers that you have seen or you've heard about. And if those aren't efficient, you know, or is it a disservice or not, you know? Yeah, yeah, makes sense. Yeah, one of the questions I have is, you know, we're talking about, earlier we were talking about, you know, sharing information between agencies and scaling your real-time information center. Today, you know, what do you see is the biggest impediment to do that? So, one, and this is the world-accorded to Jamie Hudson, right? So, this is not endorsed, probably, by many.

I'm not a fan of real-time centers in every single agency. I think it's inefficient. I think that in my short period of time in this world in, you know, four years, it has stood out as that is an inefficient way to run business, right? And I do feel that every agency needs to be connected in a real-time center way. And so, that is what is kind of driving me right now, is that concept of, you know, looking at these, I say smaller cities and what I mean by that is, these are not giant cities with 500 or more sworn officers, et cetera, right?

These smaller cities may not have that infrastructure money to build a real-time center, but they can offer a body to help staff a built real-time center in a region, and then that real-time center runs real-time operations for that region, right, to include all the smaller cities, et cetera.

So, ultimately, it makes sense to have regional intelligence centers, regional crime centers, right?

16:00 - Closing Remarks

Thank you, Jamie Hudson, for your time and insightful conversation. We appreciate the valuable information you shared. Glad to do it!